

## ABSTRACT

A new method is provided of treating the wafer in or on the surface of which a patterned and developed layer of photoresist has been created for the purpose of creating openings in underlying layers of semiconductor material. The wafer is exposed, after the via or plug etch has been completed, to high temperature of between about 250 and 400 degrees C., using a hot plate or a furnace, in an environment of low or atmospheric pressure. The exposure of the wafer to elevated temperatures can be in an environment with or without inert gasses or with or without the presence of a base or forming gas. The dual damascene structure is then completed using a layer of DUV photo, an trench opening is created in the layer of DUV photoresist that aligns with the via opening.